

## ***FIRE SAFETY IS A STATE OF MIND!!***

Parents, teachers, administration, everyone wants their schools to be safe as possible for their children. However, unless they are in the Fire Safety business, people do not know many of the ways to keep their facilities fire safe.

The Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office has developed these informational brochures so our clients may learn some of the tips for fire safety. These tips are based on the most common Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code infractions we find in schools throughout the Commonwealth.

## ***10 HOT FIRE SAFETY TIPS!!***

1. ***Exits:*** Exit doors, stairways and corridors are provided so that people using the facility have an easy means to exit the building in the event of an emergency. Most often, but not always, these exit ways are marked with exit signs. Often, but not always, these doors are operated by panic type hardware, which a person merely has to push to open the door. Panic hardware must work properly.

Furniture, athletic equipment, or anything that will keep people from getting to an exit in normal lighting, darkness, or smoky conditions must never block exit ways, even temporarily. Also exit doors must never be locked from the inside when the building is occupied. This includes after school hours if the building is occupied.

2. ***Emergency Lighting:*** Many school facilities have emergency lighting, which

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provides *temporary* lighting in the event of power failure. This lighting is not designed to allow normal operations during a power failure but only minimal lighting for up to one hour to allow safe evacuation of your facility.

Battery operated emergency lighting is to be checked once a month for 30 seconds. Pushing or sliding the test button provided can do this. Yearly, the light must be tested for one hour.

3. ***Exit Lights:*** Most schools have exit lighting at each required exit door. The lights in these fixtures must be operating at all times. If these fixtures have battery back up they must be tested as above.

4. ***Extension Cords:*** Extension cords are for temporary use *only*. Temporary use includes Christmas lighting and using an audiovisual device somewhere other than where it is normally kept. Extension cords are never to be run through doors, windows, or under rugs or carpeting. Homemade extension cords are not allowed in schools. If the cords from an appliance do not reach an outlet, a permanent outlet should be added to supply that appliance.

5. ***Multi-Plug Adapters:*** Multi-plug adapters are designed to allow more than one plug to be plugged in to a single outlet. These are **not allowed** in school facilities. If additional outlets are needed, permanent outlets should be provided. These may require an additional circuit. Certified electricians should be contacted to do this type of work.

6. ***Decorations:*** Decorations, curtains and drapes must be either noncombustible or flame resistant. Decorations cannot be excessive in the classroom or corridor. Burlap, fish netting,

parachutes and similar materials cannot be suspended from the ceiling unless approved. Decorations are limited to 20% of total wall area in corridors. Contact your nearest State Fire Marshal's office prior to decorating for dances etc.

7. ***Fire Drills:*** Schools are required by the Department of Education to "conduct fire drills at least once each week during the first twenty days of school and at least once each month for the remainder of the school term." Students should know **and practice** their primary and alternate fire escape route.

8. ***Material Storage:*** Storage cannot be closer than 24" below a ceiling. Sprinkler heads must never be painted or used for hanging decorations or other items.

9. ***Fire Extinguishers:*** A teacher's primary responsibility in a fire is to activate the alarm system and get his/her children to safety, not to fight the fire. NFPA Standard 10 maintenance is required once per year on fire extinguishers. Trained vendors perform this maintenance. Designated staff must perform a monthly visual inspection of every fire extinguisher, initial and date the tag on the extinguisher. Report any broken, missing or expelled fire extinguishers to school administration for repair or replacement.

10. ***Fire Rated doors:*** Rated, self-closing fire doors in hallways, stairways, classrooms, and bathrooms must work properly. These doors cannot be chocked, tied open, or made inoperable in any way.

## WEB ADDRESS

<http://www.dhcd.vipnet.org/dbfr/sfmo/sfmoindex.htm>

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
CONTACT THE REGIONAL STATE  
FIRE MARSHAL'S NEAREST TO YOU.**

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# FIRE SAFETY

# *TIPS*

**FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
SCHOOLS**

Based on the  
Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code



Presented by

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